

In Nomine Jesu!

Last Judgment

November 8, 2009

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Hecla, SD

Text: Luke 19:11-27 - *Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 'So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 'But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 'And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 'Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 'And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 'And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 'Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 'Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 'And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 'And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 ('But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')* 26 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 'But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "

Theme: Waiting for the King's Return

- I. Entrusted with His goods
- II. Working while we wait

Dear fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God, fellow redeemed,

How are you at waiting? Some people have been blessed with a great deal of patience - others, not so much. This year the Lord has been testing the patience of our farmers. He caused the crops to grow in their fields but gave wet weather which kept them from being able to harvest those crops for a time. I imagine it has been very difficult to drive by those fields of crops ready for harvest and know that it was too wet to bring them in. Yet, even though they couldn't get into the fields to harvest those crops, they didn't sit around staring at the fields waiting for the water and mud to dry up. There was other work for them to do while they waited.

This Sunday is called "Last Judgment" Sunday. On this day our attention is directed to the promised second coming of Jesus in glory. It can be hard at times to wait for Jesus' return. We wish He would come now to take us from this world of disease, death, and war. But what are we to be doing while we wait for Jesus to return? Are we to be like the disciples on

Ascension Day who just stood staring up into heaven? It took some heavenly angels to shake them out of their daze and remind them that they had work to do while they waited for Jesus to return.

To help us understand the work Jesus has left us to do while we wait for His return, we have this parable in our text. Jesus often used parables as a tool to teach the people certain truths about the Kingdom of God. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. He speaks of a king who goes to a far away country to receive a kingdom for himself. While he is gone the king entrusts his servants with his goods and tells them to work while they wait for his return. This parable speaks to us as servants of the King of kings as we await Jesus' return.

Jesus tells of a nobleman, some one of noble birth who went to a far away land to receive a kingdom for himself. This nobleman went to be crowned king in a far off land. But before he left he called 10 of his servants to them. This noble man gave each of his 10 servants one mina. Now a mina is equivalent to a paycheck for 100 days of work, so it is no small amount. This nobleman told his servants to put that money to work while he is gone.

The nobleman traveled to that far away country where he was crowned king, receiving his kingdom. So the newly crowned king returned and he wanted to find out how his servants had done with the money he had entrusted to them. The first servant we hear of was very successful. **"Master, your mina has earned ten minas."** That's a pretty solid investment package! He earned 10-fold what the king had given him. Since the servant proved that he was trustworthy with a small thing, the king knew he could trust him with big things and put him in charge of ten of his cities.

The next servant was likewise successful with his investments. **"Master, your mina has earned five minas."** A five-fold increase! For the servant's faithfulness in putting the king's money to work, the king could trust the servant with much real-estate, 5 cities.

But the third example we are given out of the ten servants, said this to the king, **"Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow."** This servant knew how powerfully successful his master was and what an austere or hard man he was. He knew the king found success with little or no effort. Rather than investing the king's money, this servant wraps up the money in a handkerchief. He did nothing with what the king had entrusted to his care while he was gone.

The king judges this lazy servant by his own words, **"Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?"** This servant showed his true colors to the king. He was wicked and lazy. The king entrusted him with his own money and the servant did nothing with it. He didn't even put it in a bank account to collect some interest with it while the king was gone.

So the king orders that his one mina be taken away and given to the servant who had earned 10 minas. This didn't make any sense to those standing around, because that servant already had ten! The king replied, **"I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."** That first servant proved he could be trusted. The last servant proved that he could not be trusted with even the king's smallest wealth.

So what was Jesus trying to tell us with this earthly story? Well, we learn of the purpose in the first verse of our text: "**He was near Jerusalem and . . . they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.**" The time of our text is shortly before Palm Sunday. The disciples seemed to sense that something big was coming. At this time Jesus knew His disciples didn't really understand the kingdom of God. Many thought the kingdom of God was going to be an earthly kingdom, just like that of King David and Solomon. They thought Jesus was going to Jerusalem to claim the throne. So it is that Jesus tells them this parable to help them understand a truth about the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was headed to Jerusalem, but what had to take place there was not what the disciples expected. He was not going there to defeat the Romans, but as it seemed, to be defeated by them. His throne would be the cross. His only crown would be a crown of thorns. He had to become a curse for us that He might redeem us from the curse of the Law. He would suffer the pains of hell and He would die on the cross for the sins of the whole world. The King they expected to be crowned would die a cursed death. It would appear that the enemies of Jesus' triumphed over Him. But on the third day the true victory would be revealed. Jesus would rise from the dead. And forty days after His resurrection Jesus would ascend into heaven to the right hand of the Father to receive His kingdom.

So it is that the King of kings has gone to the distant land of heaven and has promised He will return. When He called you to faith He made you one of His servants. And as His servants the King has said to us, "**Put this money to work until I come back.**" The mina the King of kings has given us is the very message of His suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus has given us His Gospel in Word and Sacrament and has commissioned us to "preach the Gospel to all creatures." The very message that He used to call us to faith and make us His servants is the same message that He has called us to put to work until He returns.

Can you think of anything more valuable than the Gospel? Is there any other message that opens heaven and converts sinners to God? Other than Jesus, is there any other name under heaven by which we must be saved? God gave His most prized possession - His one and only Son to save sinners. He now wants the whole world to know what His Son did for them. Jesus suffered and died that we might not perish, but live eternally! What could be of more value than everlasting life?! The King has entrusted us with this soul-saving message.

"**Put this to work until I come back,**" Jesus says. Read in the book of Acts and hear how the apostles of Jesus put the Gospel to work. How the Apostle Paul spread the Gospel through Asia minor and parts of Europe. You could truly say that Paul put the Lord's mina to work and it gained ten-fold. There are also those who have put the Gospel to work and the Lord's mina gained five-fold. The increase is not the important part for us. God grants the increase. In the parable the king praised and rewarded the servants for their faithfulness whether 10 was gained or 5 was gained. The important part was that they put it to work and the Lord granted the increase.

There are however those wicked servants who are fatalists. They think that the Lord is going to accomplish what He is going to accomplish so it doesn't matter what we do. Such a servant takes the Gospel, wraps it up, and sticks it in his pocket. Rather than putting the Gospel to work and telling others why the Son of God died, he keeps it wrapped up and to himself.

So where do we fit in? Do we feel that the Gospel is for us and us alone? Should we sit idly by staring up into heaven waiting for Jesus to come back? Should we sit here and stare at

the door to church expecting people to come in? After all doesn't God take out what He does not put in and reap what He does not sow?

It is a real temptation to be selfish and wrap up this Gospel and keep it to ourselves, waiting idly until Jesus returns. It is easy to feel comfortable with our congregation being the size it is with the people we have here. But why did Jesus die on the cross? Did the Son of God become man, get cold, get hungry, get tired, weep and die just for us? He did it for you and me, but not for you and me alone! Jesus did it for the whole world. Sure there are many in the world who are enemies of Jesus, who hate Him and do not want Him to become their King - them Jesus will deal with Himself on Judgment Day when He returns. But what about us? Jesus has entrusted us with the very message of His life, death, and resurrection. The King says, "Until I return, put this to work."

How can we put the Gospel to work? It has been remarked that we live in a very well church community. Those who want to go to church, have a church to go to. Here in Hecla we have five churches within 5 miles of us - three of which carry the name "Lutheran." And so we may think that there isn't much work to be done around. But remember, Christ has not called us to gain increase - simply to put to work what He has entrusted to us. Christ has not commissioned us to "convert all nations" simply to proclaim the good news.

Is there a need to share the good news in our neighborhoods, jobs, and schools? Absolutely! How many of those well-churched neighbors of yours know the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Do they know that the only thing necessary to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are they longing for answers in a world full of questions? Think for a minute of your five closest friends that do not go to church here. If Jesus were to return today, how many of those would be headed to heaven and how many to hell? Would you regret that you knew them so well and yet never talked with them about the most important thing in the whole world?

Again, our goal is not necessarily to gain members for our church, but to testify of the hope that is within us. We are lights in this dark world of sin and death. We know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We know Jesus' name is the ONLY name under heaven whereby we MUST be saved. We do hope that we as a congregation will be able to help them grow in the knowledge of the truth, but that may not always be possible. Our focus is to take what Christ has given us in the message of the Gospel and put it to work.

May God help us to be His faithful servants who are eager to put His Gospel to work. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He has now ascended into heaven to receive His kingdom unto Himself. He is returning very soon. In the meantime He has entrusted us with His Gospel - that soul saving message of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. May we never wrap it up and lazily keep it only to ourselves. Let us ever keep working for the King who died to save us as we eagerly await His return. Even so, come Lord Jesus! AMEN.